

DEPARTMENT OF FOOD AND AGRICULTURE

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A.G. KAWAMURA, Secretary



September 14, 2005

To: All State Departments of Agriculture

Subject: Proposed California Pilot Program for Voluntary Ant-free Certification of Out-of-State Bee Shipments

The California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA) is proposing a voluntary apiary certification program to facilitate movement of out-of-state bee shipments into California for pollination, while insuring that pest species of ants are not introduced or disseminated in the state.

This program will be implemented on a pilot basis for the upcoming season. It will allow certified ant-free bee shipments to enter California, undergo a standard inspection at the California border, then proceed to destination and offload without requiring supervision by local county agricultural inspectors. Additionally, certified shipments on which five or fewer worker ants are found during border inspection will be allowed to proceed to destination for supervised offloading and detailed inspection with the county agricultural inspector's office.

This is a departure from current policy, which has a zero tolerance for ants (including workers) and requires offloading of all incoming bee shipments to be supervised by a county inspector during normal business hours. The certification procedures, described in the enclosed protocol for trucks and trailers, will expedite out-of-state bee shipments while providing the necessary assurance of ant-free conditions. Participation in the program is voluntary; however, uncertified shipments will be subject to the current policy (zero ant tolerance and supervised offloading).

To be eligible for this program, pallets and beehives must be inspected and certified as ant-free no more than seven days before arrival in California. Certified apiaries confirmed as ant-free during standard California border inspection will be eligible for the new handling procedures.

Under this program, the certifying state must be the last state where the apiaries were placed on the ground before coming into California. All states participating in this program should be willing to inspect and certify apiaries from other states, as resources allow. An original phytosanitary certificate or Certificate of Quarantine Compliance, with the seal of the origin state department of agriculture, signed by an authorized inspector (see enclosed protocol for specific requirements) will be accepted.

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Please indicate whether your state is able to participate in this program. If so, please provide a list of names and phone numbers/email addresses of certifying officials in your state. This information should be sent by email to Carla Markmann at cmarkmann@cdfa.ca.gov.

Sincerely,

William A. Sandige, Chief
Pest Exclusion Branch
Plant Health and Pest Prevention Services

WS:cm:cg

Enclosure

cc: American Beekeeping Federation
California State Beekeepers Association
National Honey Board
Dan Cummings
Scott Hunter
Gary Leslie
Nick Condos
Courtney Albrecht